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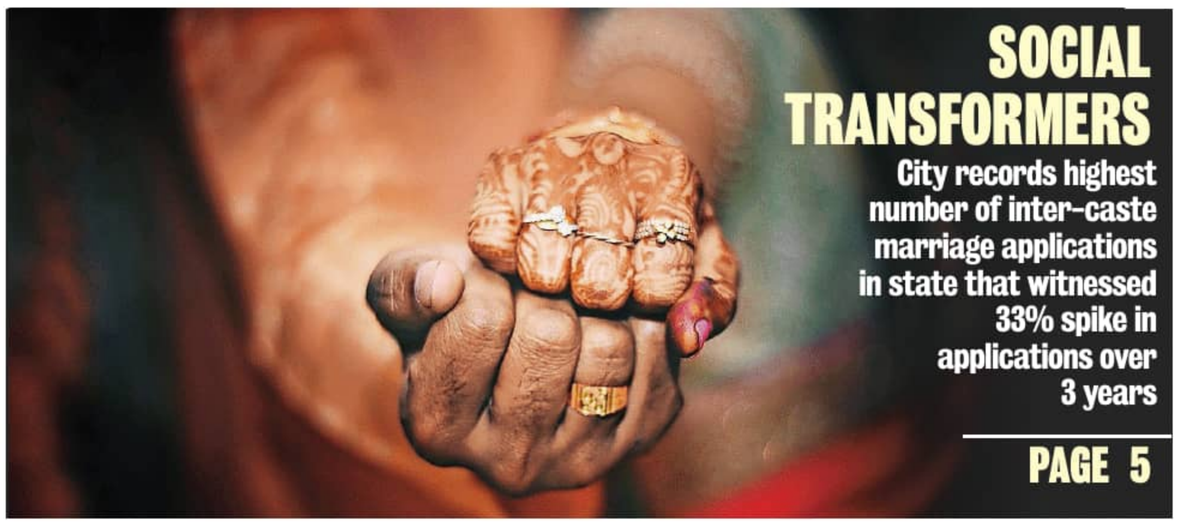
Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 27 | Min 17 | Humidity 60% Partly sunny Sensex 84,572 | Nifty 25,910 | Gold 1,24,851 | Silver 1,59,366 | Dollar 88.61 | Euro 102.58 | GBP 116.12

ROOT CAUSE

Any season is treefall season in city as authorities fail to plug infestations and to remove concrete chokeholds

PAGE 3



SOCIAL TRANSFORMERS

City records highest number of inter-caste marriage applications in state that witnessed 33% spike in applications over 3 years

PAGE 5

As banks block accounts for 'suspicious activity' without any prior notice or explanation, it is the daily wage earners who suffer most as they are locked out of their own money, missing EMI deadlines and facing huge penalties

YOU CAN'T TOUCH THIS

Abnormal transactions trigger alerts, former bank official says

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Naresh (not his real name), an auto driver in the city, got the shock of his life on the day he had to pay his EMI. His bank account had been abruptly frozen and he had no way to access his money. Then began his struggle to get the account working again -- he has been unable to pay the EMIs for the past two months now.

The account was supposedly blocked for "suspicious activity". This is just one case, but with banks increasingly freezing accounts without notice over high-value transactions, many in the city have suffered. While intended to curb cybercrime, the move is causing severe hardship for customers, many of whom are waiting 15 to 30 days for restoration and are now turning to the courts to prove their identity and clear their names to unfreeze the account.

The auto driver who BM spoke to expressed his frustration. "I had the money, but I couldn't make any transactions," he explained.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

"What the bank is doing is good when you consider the rise in cybercrime cases, but they should at least send a message or a notice to customers. That way, we can be financially prepared —Auto driver

Malware detected

2 back-to-back scams reveal how cybercrime operators are setting up shop in K'taka

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Karnataka is emerging as a launchpad for global cyber fraud networks, investigators say, with two major rackets, one in Bengaluru and another in Belagavi, busted within days of each other. What earlier looked like random, small online scams now seems to be something much bigger. It appears that international fraud groups are not only hiring people from Karnataka, but are actually setting up their main cybercrime operations here, in the state.

Cybersecurity experts warn that the state's booming digital ecosystem, home to India's tech capital, a vast pool of IT-skilled workers, and ever-expanding online financial activity, may now be attracting criminal networks seeking infrastructure, anonymity, and logistical support to target victims abroad, particularly in the United States.

In its first major mission, the Karnataka Cyber Command Unit (CCU) uncovered a racket that allegedly cheated over 500 US-based employees, operating from a seemingly ordinary office in Varthur Kodi, near Whitefield. The fake process and customer-support firm, Musk Communications, reportedly posed as a legitimate American service provider, using manipulated online systems to convince victims to pay for fraudulent

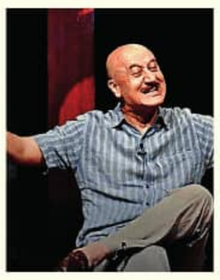
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Art meets history

Virasat Art and Virasat Art Publication are presenting 'Hindustan Files: 1757–1950', a unique exhibition celebrating art, history, and heritage. The exhibition will showcase Company School paintings, works by eminent European artists, Kalighat patachitra, Kansaripara lithoprints, vintage books, letters, photographs, and rare documents. **Where: Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Kumarakrupa Road; When: Open since November 14**

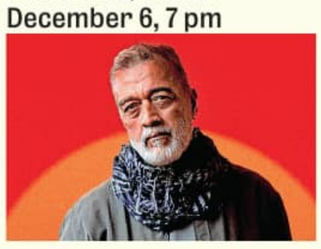
02 Theatrical journey



As part of the Bengaluru Theatre Festival Season 2, Anupam Kher will be narrating and dramatising the important events of his life in a play titled 'Kucch bhi ho sakta hai'. **Where: Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte; When: December 5, 8 pm**

03 Feel the beat

Re: Sound by Jet ALive featuring Lucky Ali will be taking the audience on a soulful journey, celebrating music that has defined generations. From nostalgic classics to new age soundscape, experience the timeless charm of a musical icon, live on stage. **Where: Phoenix Marketcity, Whitefield; When: December 6, 7 pm**



04 Comic verses

Manhar Seth will be performing in a one-of-a-kind blend of poetry and comedy that takes the audience on an unforgettable journey through love, heartbreak, nostalgia and self-discovery. **Where: Underground Comedy Club, Koramangala; When: Nov 17, 7 pm**

05 Once upon a weekend

Kukdukoo Children's Festival is bringing a weekend of fun, laughter and magic, packed with spectacular activities for children and parents. **Where: Oakridge International School, Dommasandra; When: Nov 29 and 30, 10.45 am**

Children's day celebration highlights dignity and justice

While government has enacted child protection laws it must also take measures for their implementation to safeguard children, says former Karnataka Lokayukta

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Former Karnataka Lokayukta Justice Santosh Hegde has urged the state government to ensure effective implementation of child protection laws to safeguard abandoned and orphaned children. Speaking at the 61st Children's Day celebrations in Chamarajpet on Sunday, Hegde noted that while child protection laws have been enacted, stronger measures are required. "The government enacted child protection laws but it has to take measures for the implementation of such laws to prevent crimes against children," he said.

The celebrations were organised by Bangalore Oniyavara Seva Coota (BOSCO) in association with the Bangalore District Child Welfare Committee. Hundreds of schoolchildren took out a rally as part of the event, which was held under the theme "Uphold our hopes – Unfold our dreams."

He said children must aspire to become contributing members of society, as the nation's future rests in their hands. "Nothing wrong to have an ambition but it is wrong to be over-ambitious. Children must not have flourished at the cost of others. There is no medicine for greed. It has no surgery, and it is not afraid of law. I advise children to be content because it is important to be content to lead life happily," Justice Hegde said.

Former Karnataka Lokayukta Justice Santosh Hegde at the 61st Children's Day celebrations in Chamarajpet on Sunday

He said that it was his 1866th interaction programme with children. "I want to appreciate the BOSCO for organising this programme which is meaningful and useful," he stated. He said that in earlier times, society appreciated and felicitated those who worked for the welfare of the needy. "I spent my childhood in such an environment but now society itself has become a villain for children vulnerable to atrocities. Now, society respects corrupt people who are released on bail from prison," he said.

Hundreds of schoolchildren participate in Children's Day event held under the theme 'Uphold our hopes – Unfold our dreams'

Karnataka Child Rights Observatory State Convener Dr Vasudeva Sharma NV, actress Mokshita Pai, TV artiste Ganesh, Yogesh Master, theatre actor, and District Child Protection Officer Asha were present on the occasion.

Children showcase talent at poetry gathering

A grand children's poetry gathering was organised by the Yuva Bengaluru Trust at the Kannada Sahitya Parishat auditorium, as part of the celebrations marking the 70th Kannada Rajyotsava. The event commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by Trust Founder-President G Kiran Sagar, General Secretary Swetha S Rao, Vice President BV Sunil, and participating students.

"We believe that every child—rich or poor—is equal in the eyes of god. Every child must have equal access to opportunities. Kannada-medium schools must not be allowed to close. Education should not become a business. Quality education must be available to every child," said Founder-President G Kiran Sagar. The Trust has adopted 356 government schools across Karnataka, working towards improving infrastructure and quality of education. It has been distributing free notebooks, computers, benches to government schoolchildren, especially in rural areas.

Yuktha C, a student of Class 7 at Government Model Primary School, Agrahara Dasarahalli, won the first prize of Rs 10,000. Varsha DC, a student of Class 9 at Government High School, Hosaguddadahalli, bagged the second prize of Rs 5,000, while Eeramma, a student of Class 10 at Vokkaligara Sangha High School, secured the third prize of Rs 3,000.

Huskur Halt set to transform Bengaluru commutes

East Bengaluru's tech workforce is set to benefit significantly as the long-awaited Huskur Halt Station moves closer to launch, following a key inspection by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS). With Electronic City and surrounding IT hubs struggling with limited rail access for years, the new halt station is expected to offer faster, shorter, and more reliable connectivity for thousands of tech professionals travelling daily. The station's readiness marks a major boost for suburban mobility in a region heavily dependent on road travel.

The newly built Huskur Halt, developed by K-RIDE, has completed all construction work and is now undergoing statutory inspections before entering public service in the coming days. The facility is strategically located just 5 km from Electronic City; far closer than the Heelalige Station, which lies 10 km away, allowing smoother access for IT employees as well as workers from Bommasandra and Veerasandra industrial zones. Alongside this, a new four-line crossing station at Hunnur has been established to streamline freight movement and improve connectivity to Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The CRS inspection also covers the Carmelaram–Bellandur track-doubling stretch, where trains touched speeds above 120 kmph during trial runs, paving the way for the commencement of regular services shortly.

Newly built Huskur Halt has completed all construction work and is now undergoing inspections before entering public service in coming days

Huskur Halt forms a key component of the fourth corridor of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project, spanning 35 km between Heelalige and Rajanukunte and linking 17 stations, with integrated access to the South Western Railway network. Its proximity to the Yellow Line metro terminals—Konappana Agrahara and Huskur Road further enhances multimodal connectivity for commuters.

— BMB

PU lecturers to teach school students?

The state government is moving to make newly recruited pre-university lecturers teach 9th and 10th graders as well, an attempt to merge two long-separate teaching cadres and streamline staff across schools and PU colleges. The proposal, submitted to the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, must be cleared before filling 881 lecturer posts. Officials argue that with Karnataka Public Schools and integrated campuses expanding rapidly, a unified teaching structure is the "logical next step." But the plan exposes the sorry state of systemic gaps: thousands of sanctioned posts lie vacant, workloads are uneven, and the education pipeline is increasingly stretched thin. Lecturers, however, say this 'reform' is nothing short of a downgrade. Their association warns that pushing Group-B lecturers into Group-C duties violates service rules, erodes academic hierarchy and compromises the PU system's autonomy—an important stepping stone to higher education. They argue the move adds heavy teaching burdens, muddles roles, and ultimately weakens classroom quality across both school and PU levels. As the government races to reshape the sector, educators fear the state is trying to fix long-standing staffing shortages with a shortcut that risks lowering the very standards it hopes to raise.

— BMB

Issues with tree infestation, percolation yet to be sorted out

Citizens and environmentalists raise concern over authorities' failure to clear vulnerable trees across city endangering pedestrians and motorists, highlight issues with tree infestation, percolation yet to be sorted out

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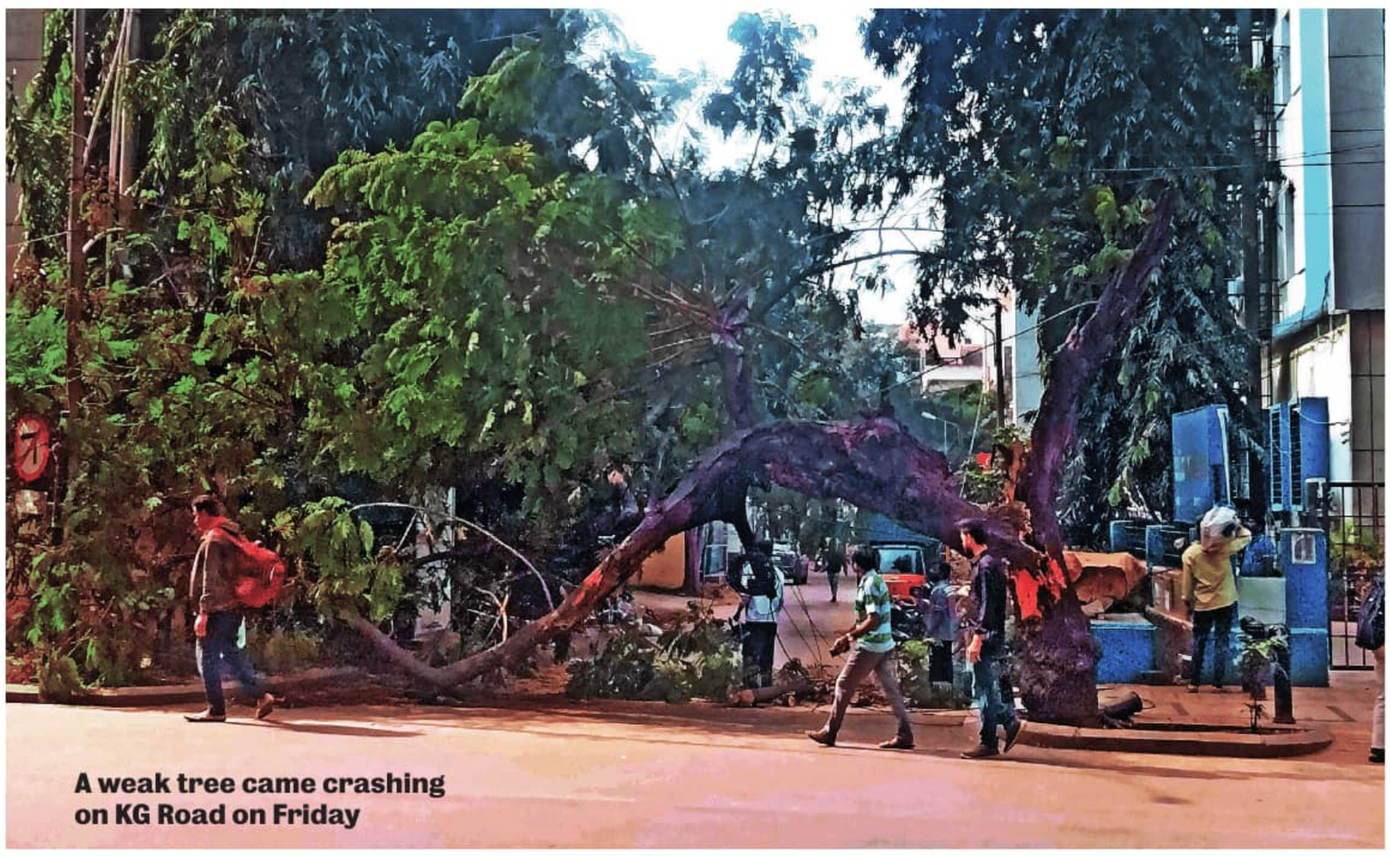

A weak tree came crashing on KG Road on Friday

The collapse of a well-grown tree on Kempe Gowda Road on November 14 disrupted pedestrian and vehicular movement, drawing attention to the larger issue of weak and unsafe trees across the city.

Although the tree's canopy was reportedly in good condition, its trunk was found to be weak, raising concerns about the risks posed by similar trees. Environmentalists criticised the apathy of civic authorities in removing vulnerable trees endangering pedestrians and motorists. They have urged the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Forest Department to proactively identify and remove weak and dangerous trees ahead of the pre-monsoon season to minimise the number of tree falls during heavy rains.

Dattatreya T Devare, an environmentalist, said the GBA Forest Department must take measures to spray pesticides on trees infested with borers and termites, noting that little effort is currently made to save such trees.

"We, in association with a few volunteers, made an attempt to treat some trees infested with borers and termites at Indiranagar. The authorities concerned have to take measures to save such trees," said Devare, while urging authorities to take appropriate action by removing weak and dangerous trees ahead of the monsoon.

Environmental activist Dr Vijay Nishanth, popularly known as the 'Tree Doctor', has urged the GBA Forest Department to ensure adequate space around trees to allow rainwater percolation. He said he had conveyed to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar during his visit to Lalbagh the importance of maintaining footpaths while leaving sufficient space around trees.

"The Deputy Chief Minister evinced interest and I received phone calls from his office but I do not know what happened to the proposal to inspect the footpaths," he said. He opined that the officials concerned have failed to follow up on the issue.

"Despite reminders and recurring incidents of tree falls, little has changed on ground, says environmental activist, urges department to work with citizens and ward-level groups to safeguard trees before any fatal incident

"The contractors and engineers are not bothered about the trees on the footpath. I have also advised the GBA Forest Department to inspect the trees that are weak and dangerous but they are yet to pull up their socks," added Dr Nishanth.

Environmental activist Vinod Jacob stressed that the condition of urban avenue trees requires urgent attention.

He noted that despite repeated reminders and recurring incidents of tree falls, little has changed on the ground. He said that many trees are struggling as their roots have been choked and damaged by concrete collars, leaving no space for rainwater to percolate and sustain them.

"Immediate on-ground action is essential. The Forest Department can work with local citizens and ward-level groups to safeguard these trees before any fatal incident occurs," said Jacob.

Blaming the GBA Forest Department officials for failing to inspect trees that required removal or pruning, Ananda Tirtha, founder-member of Hasiru Ratha, said he had written to the department 18 months ago seeking the removal of a tree posing danger to pedestrians and motorists, but his appeal went in vain.

"Forest officials did not attend ward committee meetings in the last four years citing shortage of manpower," said Tirtha.

Meanwhile, GBA Range Forest Officer Narendra Babu said the enumeration of trees, especially weak and dangerous ones, will begin shortly. "We have assigned 10 to 12 MSc (Forestry) students to identify weak and dangerous trees. They are supposed to complete the enumeration of trees in three months. Each student gets Rs 20,000 as honorarium," the Range Forest Officer said.

Toddler run over by father's car, dies

A boy aged one year and ten months died after he was accidentally run over by a car driven by his father on Saturday in Dasanapura, on the outskirts of Bengaluru, officials said.

The victim, identified as Nuthan, hailed from Mavalli in Mandya district. According to the FIR, Nuthan had travelled with his parents, Devika and Munesh, to the residence of Devika's sibling Mohan three days earlier. On Saturday morning, the family, accompanied by Mohan—who later filed the complaint—went to visit another relative in Benaka Layout.

Around 10.45 am, Munesh allegedly moved the car forward without noticing that Nuthan was playing in front of the vehicle, fatally running over him. The toddler was rushed to the hospital but was declared dead on arrival.

Dasanapura police have registered a case under BNS Section 106 (causing death by negligence) and initiated further investigation. **BMB**

Woman harassed on late-night dog walk; phone snatched

A 25-year-old city-based advocate was allegedly harassed by an unidentified man while she was out on a walk with her pet dog near Upkar Layout under Jnanabharathi Police Station limits on Friday night.

According to the complaint, the man approached her and asked if he could pet the dog. Since neighbours and passers-by often interacted with the pet, she allowed him. However, while petting the dog, he allegedly began a conversation and suddenly tried to touch her inappropriately. The woman objected and warned him, but when he attempted to touch her again, she pushed him away and slapped him.

As she began shouting for help, the accused allegedly grabbed her mobile phone, which had fallen during the commotion, and fled from the spot. By the time local residents rushed to the area, he had escaped.

The woman approached the Jnanabharathi Police Station on Saturday and filed a sexual harassment complaint. Police have registered an FIR against the unidentified accused. **BMB**

City records spike in respiratory infections

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The city is witnessing a sudden and worrying rise in respiratory infections, especially among senior citizens and people with weak immune systems. Over the past two months, hospitals have reported a steady increase in viral infections including COVID and RSV variants, triggered largely by seasonal changes and the shifting weather.

Even going by the statistics of the State Surveillance Unit, Health and Family Welfare, the number of SARI and ILI cases has seen a notable increase in comparison to last year. As per the reports, 8,576 cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) were recorded between January and November 9 this year. In comparison, 7,100 cases were reported during the same period in 2024. For Influenza-Like Illness (ILI), 4,364 cases have been reported this year, up from 3,494 cases during the corresponding period last year.

Dr Basavaraj S Kumbar, Consultant-Internal medicine, Aster Whitefield Hospital, said there has been a noticeable rise in respiratory

infections over the past two months. "We are seeing an increase in multiple respiratory viral infections, including COVID and RSV variants. The spike is largely driven by seasonal changes, which commonly trigger respiratory infections," said Dr Kumbar.

He noted that adults over 50 are being affected more frequently, with additional contributing factors including travel from other states or abroad. He said that infections are particularly common among oncology and cancer patients, those on dialysis, patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and people with uncontrolled diabetes.

Dr Pavan Yadav, Lead Consultant, Interventional Pulmonology & Lung Transplantation, Aster RV Hospital, said that viruses are also impacting immunocompromised individuals, including those who've undergone transplants and are on immunosuppressive medications. "We're using treatments like Ribavirin, and fortunately, most patients are responding well. However, we're urging people to take precautions to prevent the spread of these infections," he said. He advised that simple measures such as wearing masks in crowded areas, frequent hand sanitising, and self-isolating when symptomatic can make a significant difference.

"Over 20 to 30 per cent of patients require admission, usually those who are already sick or have existing health issues. Most patients recover with antibiotics and supportive medications, and admission is rarely needed," added Dr Kumbar.

Overcrowded shelters could backfire, warn Bengaluru vets

Experts warn Supreme Court orders could worsen rabies, overcrowding, and population spikes, urging citizens to safeguard community dogs

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Senior vets and NGOs at Jeeva Pet Hospital argue that removing street dogs from schools and hospitals is impractical

At a South Bengaluru Cares meeting, senior veterinarians, NGOs, and animal welfare groups warned that the Supreme Court's directive to remove street dogs to shelters is impractical and harmful. Vets stressed that overcrowded shelters risk disease, rising dog populations, and failed rabies control, urging citizens to question authorities and protect community dogs.

Animal welfare workers, NGOs, senior veterinary doctors, and community animal caregivers gathered at Jeeva Pet Hospital on Kanakapura Road to discuss concerns and contradictions as Bengaluru's civic authorities prepare to implement the latest Supreme Court order.

The Supreme Court has ordered the removal of street dogs from public institutions such as schools and hospitals, and their permanent relocation to designated shelters after sterilisation and vaccination.

Experts insist that this decision is not in "the favour of human welfare." They stated that the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme is the only scientifically proven method to control rabies and stabilise street dog populations, citing the example of Goa — India's first rabies-free state, which achieved this milestone through consistent ABC efforts.

Dr Nagesh Reddy, founder of Jeeva Pet Hospital and member of the Karnataka Veterinary Council, said: "In my 19 years of experience as a vet, the shelter situation will not work for street dogs. A shelter cannot house more than 300 to 400 dogs. Keeping them all there is neither practical nor sensible. Secondly, ABC is implemented only in cities. Once city dogs are removed, suburban and rural dogs will take their place — and those areas have no ABC. The new, unsterilised dogs will cause a population increase. Thirdly, a single dog with canine distemper can infect an entire shelter. The only scientific solution is effective Animal Birth Control across cities, municipalities, and panchayats. We must tell the court this is not scientific."

ASRA, an official ABC service provider in Bengaluru, said that after the Karnataka Lokayukta's orders to BBMP/Greater Bengaluru Authority to create "observation homes" and shelters for "aggressive" dogs and comply with the ABC Rules 2023, ABC centres are facing even greater strain. Radha Amarnath, President of ASRA, said:

"Animal welfare is human welfare. There is a deep lack of process in the system. After the Lokayukta judgement, dogs deemed 'aggressive' have been housed in ABC centres like ours. They are not being released, despite ABC Rules 2023 clearly stating that dogs cannot be held for more than 10 days in a dog-bite case. Out of the 33 dogs housed, maybe two can be labelled aggressive; the rest are extremely friendly. Most have been illegally relocated. This is citywide. ABC centres are backed up by these 'biting dog' cases, affecting ABC implementation. Guardians are being forced to sign adoption forms to get their dogs released."

Manjari Chaitanya, founder and director of South Bengaluru Cares, said: "Animal welfare laws exist in India. Exercise your right to ask questions. Reach out to your civil service members. Call your nodal officers, commissioners, and assistant directors and seek information about what their plan is and how street dogs positively impact your community."

Aniruddha Ravindra, Managing Director of The Praana Foundation and animal welfare warden with the Karnataka government, said: "If you see someone coming to pick up sterilised and vaccinated dogs, demand to see their work order from the municipal corporation. Note down the vehicle number, ID cards, and inform them that you will follow them to see where they are taking the dogs. Be respectful. If you do not see the vans, find CCTV footage, witnesses, and file an FIR if necessary. Make sure to collect evidence. Be patient and stay within the rule of law, but demand answers."

More than 100 physical petitions were signed during the session, reflecting growing civic concern across neighbourhoods.

Local bodies locked down

Karnataka's local governance system is sliding into near paralysis, with over 70% of rural and urban bodies operating without elected representatives. Elections to Zilla and Taluk Panchayats have been pending for five years — first delayed by the previous BJP government over OBC reservation issues, and later prolonged by the current Congress administration despite ward delimitation being nearly complete.

With the government yet to finalise reservations, the State Election Commission (SEC) has been forced to approach the court, even as the terms of nearly 5,000 Gram Panchayats expire between January and February 2026. The SEC's repeated letters since May 2025 seeking ward and reservation details have gone unanswered, prompting legal action and raising concerns over violations of the 74th Constitutional Amendment and the potential loss of crores in central grants. Urban Karnataka mirrors the same crisis: Bengaluru's civic polls have been stalled for five years, and 118 municipal bodies — including Mysuru, Shivamogga, Tumakuru, Davangere, and Mangaluru — are under administrators. With 195 more urban bodies set to complete their terms by year-end, and the government seeking additional time from the High Court to issue election notifications, the state's entire local governance framework stands suspended, held together largely by the SEC's continuous legal battles.

Meanwhile, the winter session of the state legislature will be held in Belagavi from December 8 to 19, setting the stage for intense political pressure on the government to break the deadlock. — BMB

Plastic burner fined ₹10k

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has imposed a ₹10,000 penalty on a man caught burning plastic waste along Thanisandra Main Road, after Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao personally witnessed the violation during an inspection on November 11. The man, identified as Ijaaz Khan, who sells tender coconut water, admitted to setting the waste on fire and extinguished it when questioned. As the open burning of waste is illegal, officials were instructed to levy a fine and warn him against repeating the offence. Following the directive, health inspectors and marshals verified the act and issued the on-the-spot fine, while also advising residents and traders to use proper waste bins and avoid dumping garbage on roadsides. North Zone Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar further urged shop owners to place waste bins outside their establishments to prevent littering, noting that many commercial outlets still dispose of garbage irresponsibly.

In separate enforcement drives, footpath encroachments in HBR Layout and OMBR Layout were cleared, with street vendors, pushcarts, and unauthorised OFC cables removed to restore pedestrian access. — BMB

Projects freeze amid forest land drama

Several development projects across Karnataka are facing setbacks after being labelled as built on forest land long after completion. Officials from multiple departments accuse the Forest Department of negligence and poor coordination, with projects worth crores now deemed illegal and implementing agencies fearing legal action. Although any project on forest land requires prior conversion approval, this was overlooked in many cases. In districts like Uttara Kannada, Shivamogga, Belagavi, and Haveri, even decades-old residential layouts recorded under the Revenue Department have suddenly been classified as forest land. The confusion extends to infrastructure projects, prompting Forest Minister Eshwara Khandre to order a review while the Centre stalls clearances over repeated lapses. — BMB

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Pedestrian trouble

Richmond Road

Vehicles parked on the Richmond Road footpath every Friday are causing serious inconvenience to pedestrians.

Stagnant threat

Siddaiah Road

Debris from stormwater drain works, left unattended for 15 days on Siddaiah Road near Springs Hotel, is creating a mosquito menace and severely affecting public health and nearby businesses.

Trash pileup

Millers Road

A garbage-filled spot on Millers Road has remained untouched for four months as the public continues to use it as a dumping ground.

X Corp challenges ruling on content blocks

Tech giant appeals against court order backing government powers to block online content citing public order

X Corp has filed an appeal before the Karnataka High Court challenging the recent judgment that upheld the Union Government's power to issue content-blocking orders through the Sahyog portal. The company argues that the ruling endorses a system that allows a vast number of officials to demand takedowns with limited scrutiny, creating what it describes as an uneven and legally uncertain compliance regime.

In its appeal, X Corp reiterated that the Sahyog mechanism enables blocking through Section 79(3)(b) rather than the more structured process under Section 69A, which includes procedural safeguards. The company maintains that this parallel route undermines those protections, saying the High Court's ruling effectively legitimises "a parallel censorship regime" that dilutes the intent of Section 69A. It argues that the earlier judgment "misinterprets the statutory scheme" and allows blocking powers to expand without transparency or

accountability.

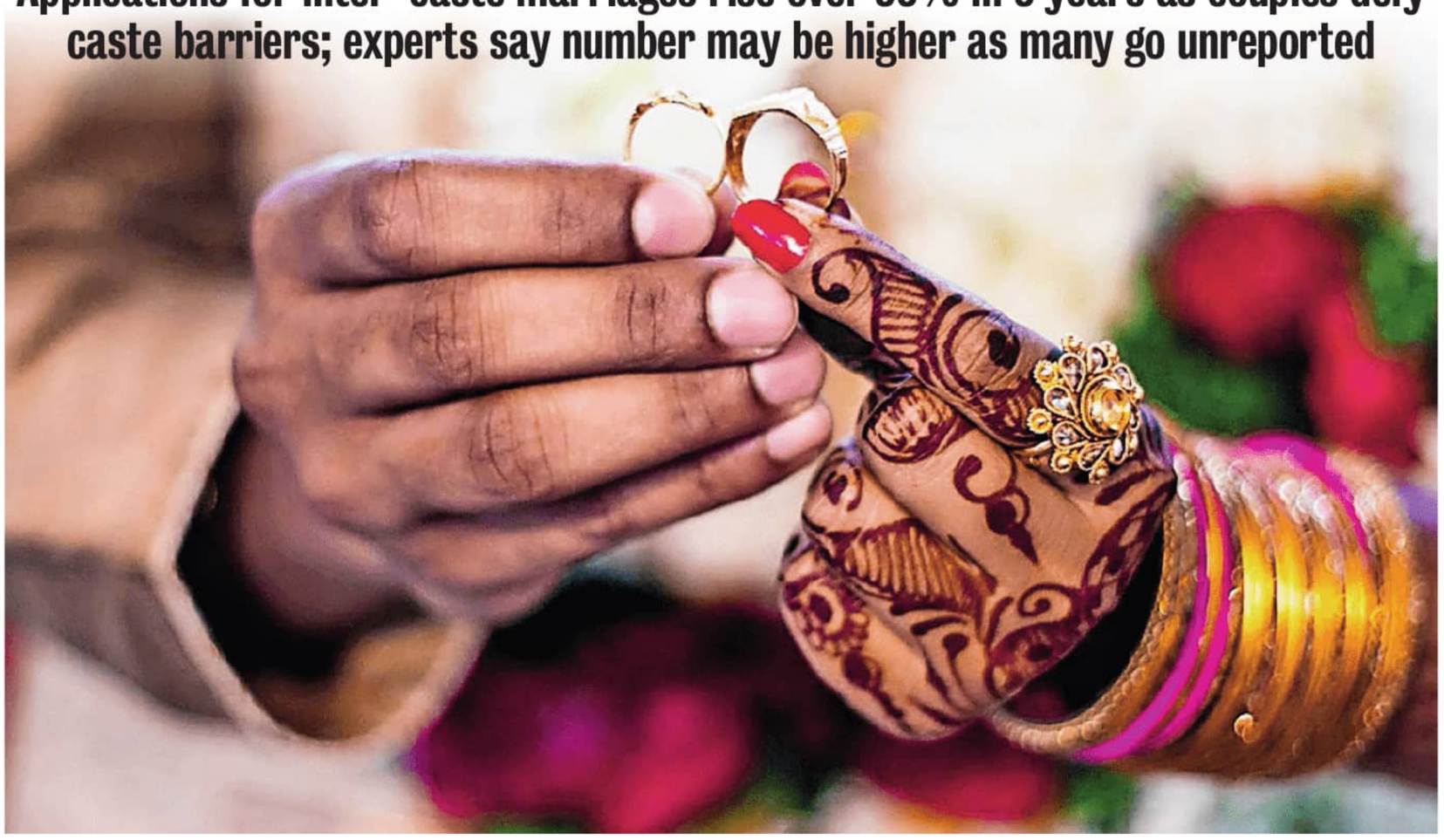
The single-judge bench had previously rejected X Corp's challenge and defended the portal, describing Sahyog as "an instrument of public good" meant to help authorities act swiftly against unlawful online material. The court had also remarked that unchecked online speech could devolve into lawlessness, emphasising that social media platforms must operate within a regulatory framework designed to protect public order and national security.

X Corp's appeal counters this position by insisting that its operations play a significant role in facilitating public discourse and that such sweeping powers need stronger oversight. The company argues that treating Sections 69A and 79 as equivalent eviscerates the safeguards that Parliament expressly built into the blocking process and risks normalising opaque takedown orders. It also disputes the earlier court's reliance on foreign precedents, calling that approach legally unsound in the Indian constitutional context.

The case has renewed the debate over the balance between state regulation and digital freedoms. With X Corp warning that Sahyog enables "arbitrary content suppression" and the government defending it as a lawful compliance tool, the appeal is expected to shape how online platforms respond to future blocking orders. The matter now awaits detailed hearing before the High Court. **–BMB**

B'luru leads Karnataka's inter-caste marriage boom

Applications for inter-caste marriages rise over 33% in 3 years as couples defy caste barriers; experts say number may be higher as many go unreported



Rise in inter-caste marriage applications positions Bengaluru as social trendsetter

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Official says surge in applications shows growing acceptance, but funds haven't kept pace, highlighting need for additional funds to clear dues

Bengaluru, often seen as the face of modern, progressive India — is now driving a quiet social transformation across Karnataka. The city has recorded the highest number of inter-caste marriage applications, with more young couples choosing love over lineage. Official data shows a 33 per cent surge in inter-caste marriages statewide over the last three years, but experts believe the actual number could be far higher, as many couples avoid registering their marriages or applying for government incentives due to social stigma or bureaucratic hurdles.

In 2023–24, Karnataka received 4,826 applications for inter-caste marriage incentives, which rose 6.4 per cent to 5,136 in 2024–25. For the ongoing 2025–26 fiscal year, 3,231 couples have already applied as of November — nearly matching last year's total with five months still to go. Bengaluru alone accounted for 1,085 applications, underscoring its role as a social trendsetter. However, of these, 2,198 applications remain pending, highlighting the persistent delays in fund disbursement. Officials expect the final number of applications to exceed 6,000 by March 2026.

According to Shivakumar, Deputy Director of the Department of Social Welfare (Bengaluru South), the district received Rs 95 lakh this year under the scheme — all fully distributed. "We still have 204 applications pending and require an additional Rs 5.64 crore to clear dues. The surge in applications shows growing acceptance, but the funds haven't kept pace," he said.

Under the initiative, a Scheduled Caste (SC) woman marrying a man from another Hindu caste receives Rs 3 lakh, while an SC man marrying outside his caste gets Rs 2.5 lakh. Half is paid in cash, and the rest is deposited for three years. Couples must apply within 18 months of marriage. A related intra-sub-caste scheme offers Rs 2 lakh to couples marrying across SC sub-castes, furthering inclusivity within marginalised groups.

For beneficiaries, the scheme is both meaningful and mired in delay. "We applied last year and received the money only this year. It's a great initiative, but the waiting time needs to be shorter," said a couple who recently tied the knot.

Sociologists believe Bengaluru's youth are at the heart of this shift, challenging deep-rooted caste norms through choice and conviction. Yet, they caution that the official numbers represent only a fraction of real inter-caste unions, as many couples avoid government registration to escape social backlash or complex paperwork. As Bengaluru leads this quiet revolution, love across caste lines is not just redefining relationships — it's reshaping Karnataka's social fabric, one bold marriage at a time.

Robbery in KR Puram, extortion in Yeshwanthpur

A flower vendor was robbed of Rs 30,000 in the crowded flower market at Kalasipalya in the early hours of Friday.

The victim, Palani, had reportedly kept the cash in the inner pocket of his clothing when four unidentified men surrounded him around 5.30 am, moments before he began his business for the day. The assailants allegedly distracted him and forcibly took the money before fleeing.

A case has been registered at the Kalasipalya Police Station. Police are analysing CCTV footage from the area to identify and apprehend the suspects. In a separate incident, a group of armed youth allegedly extorted money from passers-by in Yeshwanthpur on Friday night. According to residents, the accused threatened to attack those who refused to pay. Panic spread in the locality, prompting residents to raise an alarm, following which the youth fled the spot.

Yeshwanthpur police are verifying CCTV footage from the vicinity to trace the accused. **–BMB**

Software engineer killed, friend hurt in bike crash

A 25-year-old software engineer was killed and his friend injured after their motorcycle crashed into a road divider at Electronic City Phase 1 in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

The victim, identified as Vishal, was returning home with a friend after a late-night dinner when the accident occurred.Preliminary investigations suggest that the bike was being ridden at high speed, and Vishal allegedly lost control before hitting the divider. A passerby rushed both men to a nearby hospital, where Vishal was declared dead on arrival. His friend is undergoing treatment and is yet to be formally identified by police. **–BMB**

Fair festivities

Basavangudi's annual groundnut fair draws steady crowds, with vendors selling peanuts and local produce, reflecting a long-standing tradition and community participation

State thrives with locals, misses global tourist boom

Karnataka witnesses domestic tourism growth, but minimal international arrivals underline the state's untapped potential in the global travel market

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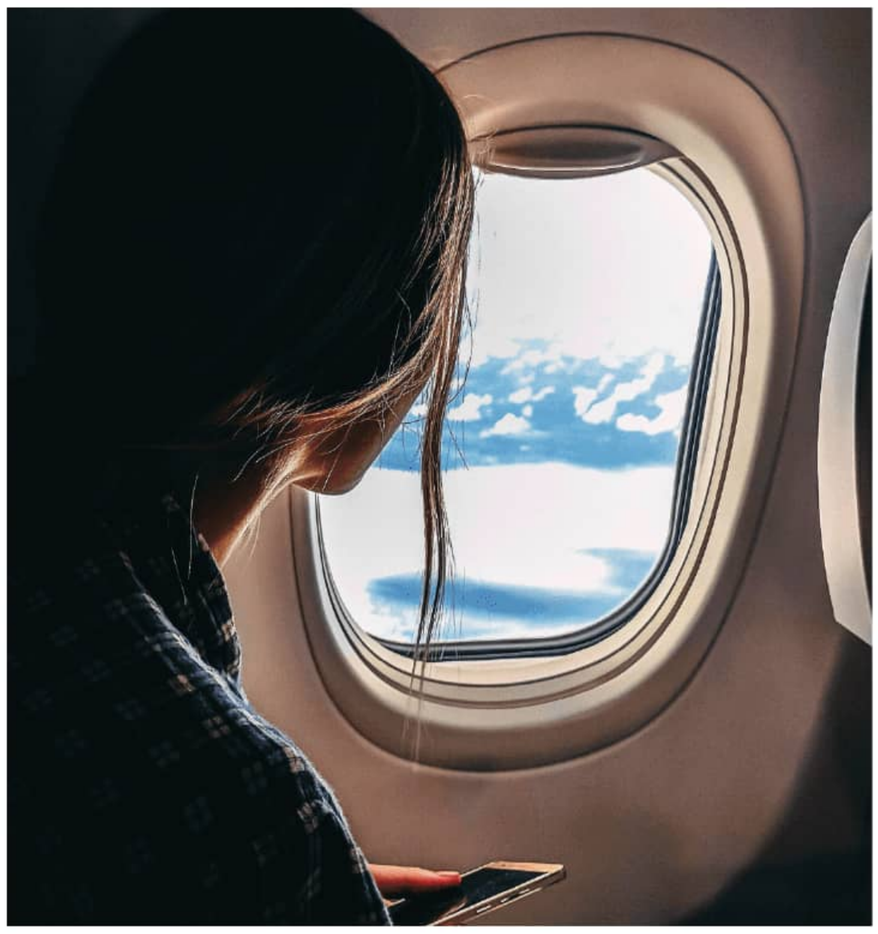


While India's foreign tourist numbers near pre-pandemic peaks, Karnataka captures less than half a million visitors, highlighting a stark contrast with its booming domestic tourism, which shattered records at over 30 crore travellers in 2024

Despite India's impressive rebound in foreign tourist arrivals post-pandemic, Karnataka's share remains modest, contributing less than 0.5% of the country's total international footfall. While India welcomed 0.99 crore (9.9 million) foreign tourists in 2024, Karnataka accounted for just 4.85 lakh (0.485 million) — a small fraction of the national total.

Before COVID-19, in 2019, India had attracted 1.09 crore foreign tourists, while Karnataka recorded 6.09 lakh, roughly 0.56% of the national inflow. The pandemic in 2020 saw India's arrivals crash by nearly 75% to 0.27 crore, while Karnataka's figures dropped by 72.9% to 1.65 lakh. The following year, 2021, was even bleaker, with India slipping another 44% to 0.15 crore, and Karnataka falling a further 56.4% to 0.72 lakh, according to the data.

The recovery that followed was sharp but uneven. India saw a 366% surge in 2022 to 0.70 crore, while Karnataka recorded a 79.2% rise to 1.29 lakh. The state's rebound accelerated in 2023, jumping 217% to 4.09 lakh, mirroring India's national increase of 34% to 0.94 crore. By 2024, India's foreign tourist numbers grew another 5% to 0.99 crore, and Karnataka too inched up by 18.6% to 4.85 lakh — still far below its pre-pandemic benchmark of 6.09 lakh. In short, while India is now almost back to its 2019 levels, Karnataka's recovery, though steady, underscores how foreign tourism in the state remains a marginal slice of the national picture.

Domestic tourists drive Karnataka's tourism revival

Unlike foreign tourism, Karnataka's domestic travel sector has rebounded spectacularly, emerging as the real growth story. According to the data, the state hosted 22.79 crore domestic tourists in 2019, which plummeted 66% to 7.74 crore during the 2020 lockdowns. A mild uptick of 5% followed in 2021, reaching 8.13 crore. However, by 2022, Karnataka's domestic tourism roared back, climbing 124% to 18.24 crore visitors. The growth momentum continued through 2023, with a 55.8% jump to 28.41 crore, and a further 7.2% in 2024, touching 30.46 crore — a new record for the state. Tourism officials credit this surge to better connectivity, the promotion of eco- and heritage destinations, and a shift in post-pandemic travel preferences towards local experiences.

Overall picture

Across the country, India's foreign tourist inflow is now just a step away from its pre-pandemic highs. From 1.09 crore in 2019 to 0.99 crore in 2024, the recovery represents a near 90% restoration of international travel levels. Americans continue to be the largest group of foreign visitors, forming 18.13% of arrivals in 2024, followed by Bangladesh (17.59%), the UK (10.28%), and Australia (5.2%).

Forest officials battle viral misinformation

Across several districts, a surge of AI-generated tiger videos has created a strange new crisis — one where digital imagination triggers real-world fear. Over the past month, as genuine tiger and leopard attacks occurred in forest-fringe villages, miscreants seized the moment to flood social media with fabricated sightings. Doctored clips of tigers strolling through towns, edited roars, and even claims of 'phantom tigers' have circulated widely, blurring the line between threat and theatrics.

The fallout has been chaotic. Forest officials in divisions such as BRT now field 20–25 distress calls a day — many sparked by viral misinformation rather than real danger. Field teams are being diverted from actual conflict zones to chase shadows created by AI tools. Authorities, alarmed by how easily technology is being weaponised to trigger panic, are preparing legal action against those spreading false alerts.

Masks against a predator

While the digital jungle erupts with rumours, the real forests of Mysuru district are battling a genuine surge in tiger movement. In villages bordering Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary and Bandipur Tiger Reserve, the Forest Department has rolled out an unusual defence: 10,000 tiger-protection face masks meant to be worn on the back of the head. The idea, backed by wildlife experts, is simple — tigers prefer attacking from behind, and a rear-facing 'human face' can make them hesitate.

The urgency is grave. Between October 16 and November 7, tigers attacked four farmers, killing three. With nearly 20 big cats currently moving along the forest edges of HD Kote, Saragur and Nanjangud — many searching for mates or guarding cubs — the probability of confrontation has spiked. With safaris suspended, staff have been redeployed for mask distribution, taking cues from a successful experiment in the Sundarbans where similar masks curbed attacks. In the past month alone, six tigers, including four cubs, have been captured from conflict zones, one of them linked to two farmer deaths. **— BMB**

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Stern view

The Chief Minister has reportedly taken a stern view of the prolonged delay by three cabinet sub-committees that have failed to submit their reports for over six months, including the panel formed to study the Justice Michael D'Cunha Commission findings on the alleged multi-crore COVID-era scam during the BJP government. At last Thursday's cabinet meeting, he expressed clear displeasure and directed the committees to file their pending reports without further delay. The lagging panels are the subcommittee tasked with action on the COVID scam report, the group reviewing and recommending financial reforms for universities, and the Dr G Parameshwara-led team examining the implementation of the NICE project.

Sonic scare

Residents of Chikkaballapur were startled last Thursday when a deafening boom from a US Air Force B-1B Lancer bomber—flying a test sortie around 10:30 am over villages such as Aroor, the Government Nandi Medical and Research Centre area, Aavalanagenahalli, Doddapailagurki, Chikkapailagurki and Tumakalhalli—triggered panic, with many mistaking the roar for a helicopter crash. Anxious villagers alerted police, prompting officers to fan out across hillocks and scrubland in search of a possible wreck until Kempegowda International Airport's air traffic control confirmed the noise came from the B-1B, which had already landed safely in Bengaluru as part of a US–India joint military exercise, finally bringing relief to both district police and residents.

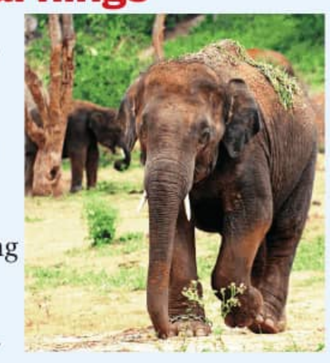
Prison rant

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara tore into prison officials at Parappana Agrahara Central Jail last week, accusing them of shaming the department nationally. "I didn't come to check your data scores; the department's honour is at stake," he scolded, demanding explanations for outdated videos, missing investigations, and the mysterious entry of banned items like mobile phones and liquor. Questioning why nothing was detected during inspections and how contraband reached inmates, he called out the officials' incompetence, asking pointedly, "At the single entry gate, can't you track what goes in or out?"

Division call

Just as the political dust from the "Separate North Karnataka" chorus began to settle, another voice has risen from the South — this time demanding a "Separate Mysuru State." The Mysuru State Formation Committee (provisional) has revived an old dream, urging the Centre to carve out a new state comprising Mysuru, Mandya, Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru, Shivamogga, Bengaluru, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Hassan, Davangere, and surrounding districts. Committee chief Maridullaiah argues that with Karnataka's population now over 3.5 crore, dividing it makes "administrative sense" — after all, the US has 50 states with balanced populations! The logic? Forget linguistic unity — governance efficiency should drive the redrawing of states. He even cites Telangana's creation as precedent and suggests that before the 2028 delimitation exercise, the Centre should pull the trigger. However, Kannada activists have condemned the proposals.

Wildlife warnings



During a KDPI meeting at the ZP hall, the Chief Minister sharply questioned forest officials on why elephants and tigers are venturing from forests into human habitats, demanding scientific explanations and urgent solutions. He instructed officials to refill forest waterholes, remove invasive lantana, cultivate fodder, and maintain constant monitoring to prevent wildlife from straying. The CM also warned of strict action against negligence leading to human casualties. When a senior official delayed providing data on social forest coverage and expansion, the CM berated him, asking if he should visit their home to get the information, leaving the official silent and unmoved.

Leave shock

The unexpected leave of B Dayanand, ADGP of the State Prisons, has sparked intense debate within the government. Known for never taking personal leave in his three-decade career, Dayanand's absence coincided with a high-level meeting at the central prison office in Parappana Agrahara, drawing attention and surprise among senior officials. The move comes in the wake of controversies surrounding special privileges granted to inmates, and with the department head away, discussions on accountability and administrative oversight have intensified, leaving officials scrambling to address the sudden leadership gap. **— Sridhar Vivan**

BM SIMPLY PUT

Mekedatu's long-awaited reservoir flows back into focus

Tapping the tide

The Mekedatu reservoir plan near Kanakapura is gaining fresh momentum after Karnataka received a favourable Supreme Court verdict. This long-pending proposal aims to secure drinking water and boost hydropower generation for the state. Local communities, who have waited for decades, now see a clear path toward implementation.

What is the Mekedatu project about?

The Mekedatu project aims to construct a reservoir on the Cauvery River to store water primarily for drinking purposes and generate hydropower. It is centred around the Onti Gundu region, where early construction markers still stand, signalling the project's long-standing intention.

Why is this project important?

It is essential for addressing Bengaluru's recurring water scarcity and stabilizing supply to drought-prone districts around the region. The added benefit of clean power generation further strengthens the project's significance in Karnataka's long-term water and energy security.

What is the expected scale of the project?

The plan involves submerging 5,200 hectares, including 5,096 hectares of forest, and relocating 233 families across five villages. It promises a 66 TMC storage capacity and 400 MW of power generation, making it one of the state's largest water infrastructure proposals.

How old is this plan?

This project dates back nearly four decades, during which the government made initial attempts but could not proceed due to administrative hurdles and dispute-related delays. The renewed push reflects Karnataka's long-pending intention to utilize the site for strategic water storage.

Where exactly will the dam come up?

The dam is planned at Onti Gundu, a rocky stretch a few kilometres from the Sangama point where the Arkavathi meets the Cauvery. Its geographical positioning makes it naturally suited to hold large volumes of water with minimal structural complications.

What areas will be affected by submergence?

The project's submergence zone spans across Ramanagara, Mandya, and Chamarajanagar, flooding five villages—Koggedoddi, Hire Madiwala, Bommasandra, Sangama, and Muthathi. This includes 161 hectares of private land, prompting a comprehensive resettlement exercise.

How will forest land loss be compensated?

To balance the loss of 5,096 hectares of forest, Karnataka has identified alternative sites across the same three districts for compensatory afforestation. These lands will be handed to the Forest Department to ensure ecological compliance and habitat restoration.

What happens to the displaced families?

The 233 families from the affected villages will be relocated with structured rehabilitation support, including alternative land and monetary compensation. The government is expected to ensure smooth resettlement to minimize livelihood disruption and social displacement.

What is the ecological significance of the area?

The location lies within the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, home to elephants, leopards, deer, giant grey squirrels, and over 280 bird species. Its river ecosystem shelters endangered mahseer fish, crocodiles, otters, and turtles, making it a critical conservation landscape.

What did the Supreme Court decide?

The Supreme Court allowed Karnataka to advance the project by preparing and submitting implementation plans, marking a major procedural victory. This decision is seen as a setback for Tamil Nadu's objections and a green signal for long-awaited progress.

Blackbuck death toll rises to 29; probe points to infection

The death toll of blackbucks at the Kittur Rani Chennamma Mini Zoo in Belagavi rose to 29 on Sunday after another endangered animal died. The preliminary post-mortem report indicated an outbreak of a bacterial disease in the zoo, said officials.

Previously, the death of 28 blackbucks in Kittur Rani Chennamma Mini Zoo in a span of three days raised concerns, and the authorities were awaiting the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) and post-mortem reports to know the reason. Authorities confirmed that the post-mortem has revealed that the blackbucks have died because of Hemorrhagic Septicemia (HS), which is a significant and often fatal bacterial disease.

The second round of post-mortem of three blackbucks was conducted on Sunday by a team of two doctors, who arrived from Bengaluru's Bannerghatta National Park. The doctors also took the samples of the food given to blackbucks for a week. They have also conducted a health check-up of nine blackbucks that have survived.

Member-Secretary of Zoo Authority of Karnataka, Sunil Panwar, said that a team of veterinarians conducted post-mortem examinations this morning, and the zoo has also been inspected. Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has ordered strict precautions and warned of action if the staff's negligence is found. **–IANS**

SOCIALTATTLE

THAT WENT VIRAL

A video circulated by @vijeshetty on X, showing a large-diameter pipe left on the road, with two-wheelers passing through it as if using a makeshift tunnel. It was captioned that this was "the only tunnel road needed in Bengaluru," a remark clearly referencing the ongoing debate around the city's proposed tunnel-road projects.

WHAT'S TWEETING

Sudeep P Nambiar
@SudeepNbr
Follow
What kind of circus is this?
Spotted this daredevilry in Bengaluru ORR traffic near Tin Factory. Can't imagine the risk it poses for everyone on the road.
@blrcitytraffic @BlrCityPolice

A post by @SudeepNbr on X was shared showing a truck on Bengaluru's Outer Ring Road near Tin Factory, overcrowded with goods and people, including two individuals seated on a chair placed precariously on top. The unsafe travel conditions were highlighted with the caption, "What kind of circus is this?" and the post was tagged to the city traffic police.

BANGALORE MIRROR TAGGED

A story by Bangalore Mirror was tagged by @RevathyAshok, who noted that "Kudos to The Democracy Warriors — Bengaluru's civic problems meet student-powered action," while also tagging @BPACofficial.

'PSU bodies need expertise, not political leanings'

The Karnataka High Court has dismissed a petition filed by 80-year-old Nagarajappa from Mandya, who had challenged the State government's decision to refer allegations against him to the Upa Lokayukta during his tenure as chairman of Mysuru Sugar Factory Ltd. (MySugar).

A division bench of Justices DK Singh and Venkatesh Naik T was sharply critical of political appointments to key posts in public sector undertakings, observing that "the decision to appoint a politician as chairman would always result in compounding the miseries of the government company or public sector undertaking, its workmen and would result in detriment to the public interest."

The court emphasised that leadership of PSU bodies demands expertise, not political considerations. It stated, "The government must appoint only qualified person(s) having sound domain knowledge and professional excellence to the post of chairman of a government company or public sector undertaking… The decision of the government to appoint the petitioner, who had no professional qualifications and domain knowledge, as the chairman of once one of the biggest sugar factories in Asia for political reasons was a bad decision, which has resulted in losses to the extent of Rs 127 crore during his tenure."

Upholding the Upa Lokayukta's findings, the bench said there was no flaw in the inquiry conducted. **BMB**

RSS conducts route march amid tight security

The RSS on Sunday took out a route march in Chittapur assembly segment in Kalaburagi district amid tight security. The Chittapur Assembly constituency is represented by Priyank Kharge, son of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

The district administration, which had initially denied permission, gave its nod for the march following a court order, where only 350 people participated. Strict conditions were put in place, sources in district administration said. The route march started in the afternoon from the Bajaj Kalyan Mantap, proceeded for about 1.2 km, and concluded near the same venue.

Saffron flags and festoons dotted the entire route. Hundreds of people on both sides of the road welcomed the RSS workers in uniform by showering flower petals on them. Later, addressing workers, RSS Karnataka North Zone chief Krishna Joshi explained how the organisation grew despite facing several challenges, including a ban. Police made elaborate security arrangements. CCTV cameras were installed and drone surveillance was arranged along the route.

"I have never opposed the route march. All I said was take permission for it. They have got a habit of not following the rule of law. Now they are following the rule. Let them do it," the minister told reporters in Kalaburagi. **PTI**

Dreaded message: Your account has been blocked

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When he approached the bank, he was told the account had been frozen over "suspicious activity" flagged under cybercrime. Following the staff's instructions, he submitted a written request, but was informed the unblocking process would take 15 to 30 days.

He added that the bank had neither issued a prior notice nor warned him about any transaction limits. "Everyone uses UPI now, so money keeps getting credited to my account, but I can't withdraw it, not even through traditional methods because the account is blocked," he said. He also pointed out that he had taken his loan from a microfinance institution, not a bank, and faces a 10% penalty if he misses payments.

He added, "What the bank is doing is good when you consider the rise in cybercrime cases, but they should at least send a message or a notice to customers. That way, we can be financially prepared. Even informing us about transaction limits would help, so we know what could trigger such action."

Dr Harsha Thennarasu, Chief Cyber Security Advisor, told BM he has received calls from people saying that their accounts had been frozen. "When they check with the bank, customers are asked to go to the police station, and when they go to the police station, they are asked to bring a letter from the bank. Some companies have also told me that their accounts are being blocked over small transactions of ₹15,000 to ₹20,000. Just last month, I received similar complaints from four to five small firms facing the same issue," he said.

According to him, transactions may occur with or without our knowledge.

"Banks already have all our details: name, account number, phone number, and email. But as account holders, we should be informed when a large amount is credited. We should know who transferred it and other essential details. If the bank finds a transaction suspicious, they can raise a query, and the account holder should then confirm whether it is a known or unknown transaction," he said.

The key issue here is of responsibility, he said. "No one is saying banks shouldn't block suspicious accounts, but they must at least send an intimation or prior notice saying such an amount has been received and ask if it is known or unknown. This lack of intimation from banks has become the biggest challenge people are facing today," Thennarasu said.

Ramanand Sharma, a retired bank official explained that a bank employee cannot freeze an account on their own. "There must be an order or inquiry from an authorised body such as a court, a nodal agency, or a request from the account holder. Only then can an account be blocked."

He said that banks usually inform customers to settle the issue first, and only after that can normal operations resume. "Sometimes, abnormal transactions trigger alerts. For instance, if someone usually makes transactions of ₹4,000–₹5,000 but suddenly transfers a much larger amount, the system may flag it as suspicious.

In such cases, the bank may even reverse the transaction to verify its authenticity and seek double confirmation. In some situations, customers give prior written instructions to restrict transactions beyond a certain limit. When such instructions exist, the bank cannot process higher debits.

At times, to ensure safety, banks may also cite mismatched signatures or unclear instructions. If these measures help, customers usually accept them; if not, they raise objections. These are some of the possibilities."

Sharma, however, agreed that if a bank notices changes in any operational instruction, it must inform the customer. "For instance, if an account needs to be frozen, the bank must issue an acknowledgement that they cannot do it without the customer's consent. In case of any dispute, the bank is required to notify the customer and follow proper inspection procedures. Only when these instructions are documented is the bank protected," Sharma added.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Satyabrata Mahapatra R/o Flat 107 Ashish MNRST Apartment, Sy no 323/2 Bellandur Amanikere, Thubarahalli, PO: Whitefield, DIST: Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560066 have changed my minor daughter's name from Aakruti Mahapatara to Aakruti Mahapatra for all purposes.

I, PUSHPALATHA GOPALAKRISHA. R/at. NO. 843, VA Cross, BSK 1 Stage, 2 Block, B'lore-560050. Have changed to PUSHPALATHA BILENANDI KEMPANNA vide Afdt Dtd 14.11.2025 Sworn before Notary: Devaraja E.

I, Fairoz K P, R/o No 2 No 20/7 chikkbasti honnenahalli Ullalu Bengaluru 560110 have changed my minor son's name from Mohammed Hesham Swalesh Fairoz to Mohammed Hesham Swaleh for all Purposes

I, Vincent Selvaraj S/o, Vincent Joseph Residing at 4, Jogupalaya Main Road, Halasuru, Bangalore - 560008. here by declare that I have changed my name as Vincent Joseph Selvaraj.

I, Basavaraj Adiveppa Marihal R/O f 401 Arvind oasis apmt B'lore 560073 Have changed my name Basavaraj Marihal to Basavaraj Adiveppa Marihal for all future purposes.

I Anirudh Gajendra Rao R/o E-204, Legend ornate Apt, Hongasandra, Begur, Bengaluru-68, Have changed my name to Anirudh Rao.

I Vinutha R/o No 190, 26th cross, 4th main, 3rd block, nakkal bande, Bengaluru-11, Have changed my name to Vinutha D for all purposes.

GALLERIA

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Tech support con & cyber-extortion network

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"technical support" and recovery services. Police arrested 21 employees from the office, while the alleged mastermind is still on the run. Officials suggest the fraud runs into crores of rupees, pointing to a sophisticated operation that relied on cloud communication, VoIP masking, VPN layers, and scripted conversations designed to mimic genuine corporate call centres.

Belagavi 'digital arrest' network

A few days earlier, Belagavi police cracked a chillingly similar cyber-extortion network, raiding a call centre tucked inside an old building, arresting 33 people running an international fraud racket targeting US citizens. Victims were told they were under criminal investigation and were coerced into transferring money to avoid imaginary prosecution.

Preliminary investigation suggests that Karnataka-based handlers managed the financial routing and digital backend, while overseas operatives contacted victims directly. Encrypted apps, VPN-based identity masking, and cross-border payment channels were reportedly used, revealing a transnational fraud chain with Karnataka embedded into its core functioning.

These cases indicate that cybercrime networks are setting up shop in the state. They are renting office spaces, hiring trained English-speaking staff, using powerful cloud servers, and tapping

into the state's growing digital finance channels. What police are now uncovering looks less like scattered cyber theft and more like an emerging underground industry.

Cybercrime advocate and expert, Mirza Faizan Assad told BM that criminal groups are increasingly choosing Karnataka as a safe operational zone for high-end fraud schemes. "Fraud networks are using the state as a staging ground for global cybercrimes, tech-support scams, phishing, VoIP-based extortion, and malware fraud targeting US citizens. These groups often plug into larger international ecosystems inspired by Southeast Asian cyber hubs, even if not directly linked to the Golden Triangle model of forced labour," he said.

He warned that Karnataka's advantages, a tech-skilled workforce, plentiful office rentals, and loopholes in cyber-intelligence coordination, make it a tempting base for fraud syndicates. "Without stronger enforcement and data-sharing between agencies, Karnataka risks becoming a preferred headquarters for international cybercrime," he added.

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Revenge resignation

Is it a good idea to settle scores when leaving your job?

Quitting their job in a dramatic fashion is the new way for some employees to express their discontent. Between viral videos, scathing emails, and spectacular departures, "revenge quitting" reflects a deep anger against the world of work.

Many of us have experienced the anger of unfair treatment at work—and sometimes even the sudden urge to quit altogether. Tyrannical bosses, humiliating remarks, or paltry salaries can fuel these impulsive reactions.

But while most employees swallow anger and return to their jobs, some decide to leave in a way that sends a clear message to their employer. Welcome to the world of "revenge quitting."

Unlike "quiet quitting", where employees remain in their posts but do the bare minimum, "revenge quitting" involves leaving in a noisy and spectacular manner. This phenomenon has now spread throughout the world: some film their resignation for social networks, send scathing farewell emails or leave their post at the last minute – sometimes two hours before the start of a class they were supposed to teach.

These scenes illustrate the liberating dimension of "revenge quitting": a way to reclaim one's dignity when feeling ignored or mistreated. But they also reveal something more than a simple escalation of workplace drama or a generational effect: they show that some workers, when pushed to their limits, are now ready to leave in a blaze of protest.

In his classic 1970 work, * Exit, Voice, and Loyalty *, economist Albert Hirschman explained that when faced with an unsatisfactory situation, individuals have three options: to make their voice heard, to demonstrate loyalty, or to leave.

"Revenge quitting" falls into this last category—but in a particular form, designed to send a clear message to employers.

Workplace dynamics

1. Toxic superiors or work environments: Research shows that abusive supervision makes employees more likely to retaliate and resign.

2. Mistreatment by customers: Here, too, studies indicate that rudeness or incivility from customers can trigger desires for revenge among employees in direct contact with the public.

3. Emotional exhaustion: Overwork or lack of support can push some people to adopt retaliatory behaviours, including dramatic resignations.

4. Social media culture: platforms like TikTok provide a stage, transforming resignation into an act that is not only personal but also performative.

Risks and alternatives

Of course, "revenge quitting" carries risks. Dramatic departures can damage a career, especially in niche sectors where reputations spread quickly, or when resignations follow one after another after short stints in several positions.

However, for highly qualified, experienced individuals with a strong professional track record, these risks remain more limited.

> some film their resignation for social networks, send scathing farewell emails or leave their post at the last minute

The alternatives?

1. Make your voice heard rather than leave: express concerns to the human resources department, those responsible for well-being at work or union representatives;

2. Withdraw discreetly, for example by limiting the time spent preparing for meetings or avoiding additional tasks, in order to regain control over one's situation.

These alternatives can cause more harm to organisations than a dramatic departure (unless "revenge quitting" becomes a widespread phenomenon within the structure). But of course, not everyone has the option to resign, even when they want to.

A 2023 survey revealed that more than half of the world's workers would like to leave their jobs but cannot. The reasons are numerous: financial responsibilities, lack of opportunities, or family constraints.

Workplace researchers call these individuals "reluctant stayers ." A study of two organisations found that approximately 42% of employees fell into this category. Other research has observed these "stuck" employees often develop retaliatory strategies: they subtly spread negativity or undermine productivity.

In the long run, this can prove more damaging to the company than the "revenge quitting" itself.

The impact of "revenge quitting" undoubtedly depends on the context. In small organisations, a sudden departure can be devastating. A high-profile resignation can also put a strain on colleagues who have to deal with the fallout.

In large organisations, the effect is generally less severe: they can more easily absorb the shock.

When a manager or highly qualified employee leaves their position in a high-profile manner, employers generally try to avoid this scenario by attempting to resolve the issues before they escalate. For this reason, "revenge quitting" is more common among younger, precarious, or poorly supported workers.

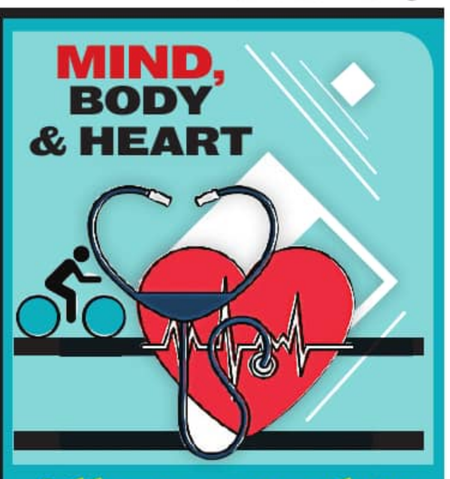
What can employers do?

"Revenge quitting" is often a sign that traditional employee support systems are no longer working. Many human resources teams are already overworked and struggling to meet all expectations. But some basic practices can still make a difference.

This requires open communication, where employees feel safe to raise issues, and training for managers to prevent abusive behaviour or micromanagement. Furthermore, even if it seems obvious, unfair workloads or conditions always end up generating dissatisfaction: ensuring fairness is therefore essential. Employers must also consider the expectations of younger generations, who are often more attached to respect and work-life balance.

Ultimately, "revenge quitting" highlights deep-seated dysfunctions within the company. Quitting in a dramatic fashion may give the employee a sense of power, especially in the moment, but it is rarely good news, neither for them nor for the organisation.

(By Kathy Hartley, University of Salford, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Tips for mothers-in-law

Points to consider
We bring to you a few points that you can consider when a new bride comes to your family.

Like a daughter
Marriages are a sacred ritual that ties people together for life. Hence, even if the bride has come from another family and is someone else's daughter, it is your sole responsibility as a mother-in-law to treat and welcome her warmly in your home. Don't stop her from doing whatever she likes. If you have a daughter and allow her freedom to do what she likes, then allow your daughter-in-law to do the same.

Inspire
A woman idolises her mother her whole life but also starts to appreciate and love her mother-in-law after she gets married. As a woman, she looks to you as an elder and wants guidance and inspiration.
You should set an example for her on how to balance her life as a wife and a working woman. Show and make her realise that one can lead a successful life by balancing her family and career well. Your guidance and advice will always inspire her.

Appreciation
A few compliments never hurt anybody. In fact, they can make someone really happy. If you see goodness in your daughter-in-law, then appreciate her for the same. Openly praise her in front of others. Praises always boost a person's confidence and make them feel cared for.

Motivation
Show her that you completely support her life and career decisions. If her working hours are strenuous, then care for her when she comes back home. Sometimes, if you don't agree with her decision, make her understand and guide her accordingly, instead of being angry.

-Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

5 warm drinks to try if you want less sugar

1. Cinnamon Tea
Cinnamon tea is a naturally sweet and aromatic drink that can satisfy your cravings without added sugar. The spice brings a warm, comforting flavor while helping regulate blood sugar levels. Simply steep a cinnamon stick or a teaspoon of ground cinnamon in hot water for a few minutes.

2. Golden Turmeric Latte
A golden turmeric latte, also known as "haldi doodh," is a traditional Indian drink that's both soothing and nourishing. Made with warm milk (dairy or plant-based), turmeric and a hint of black pepper, it offers a subtle sweetness that doesn't need sugar.

3. Herbal Chamomile Tea
It is one of the best caffeine-free warm drinks to enjoy when you want to relax without worrying about sugar. Its mild, floral taste makes it naturally pleasant, so there's no need for sweeteners. Chamomile is known for its calming properties that help reduce stress and promote better sleep.

4. Ginger Lemon Tea
Ginger lemon tea is both refreshing and revitalizing, perfect for mornings or after meals. The zesty lemon and spicy ginger blend beautifully to create a naturally tangy flavour that doesn't require added sugar. It's great for digestion, immunity and clearing out toxins.

5. Matcha Green Tea
Matcha green tea offers a smooth, earthy taste with a subtle sweetness that feels indulgent but healthy. It's made from finely ground green tea leaves, so you get more antioxidants and nutrients in every sip. Whisk it with warm water or milk to create a creamy, frothy drink. **-Femina**

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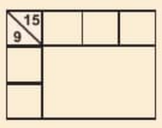
facebook.com/theBangaloremirror
@BangaloreMirror

SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

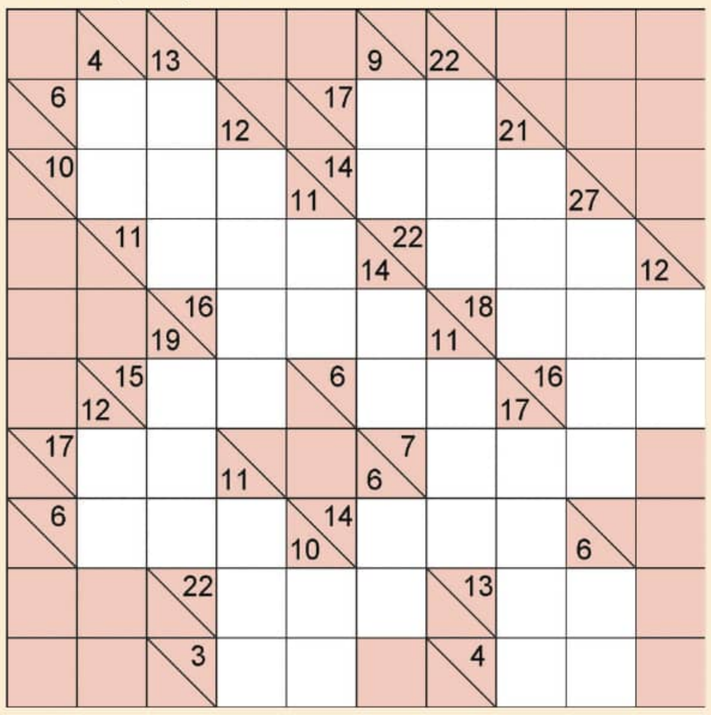
4^30×4^24÷4^3 = 4^3a
a=?

Kakuro

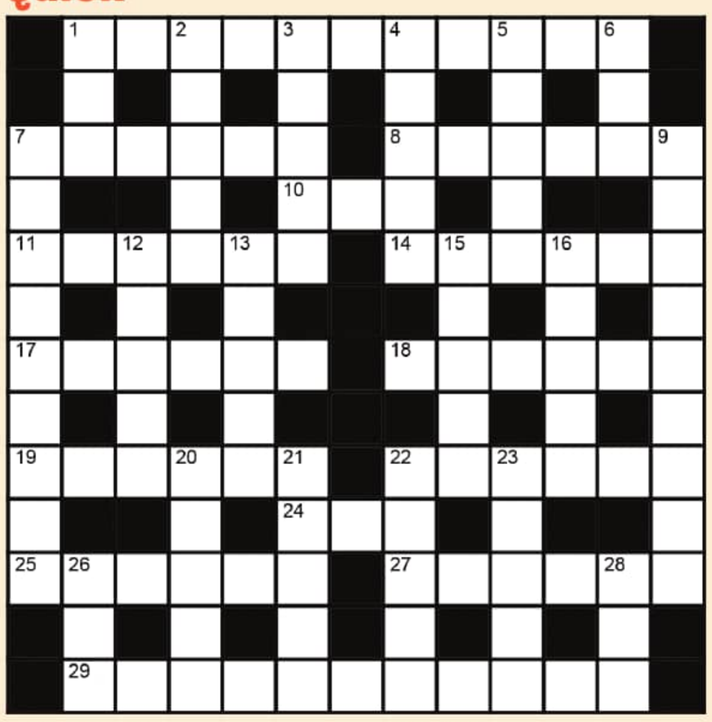
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Profligate (11)
7 On ___ of : in the interest of? (6)
8 Angelic child (6)
10 North American deer (3)
11 Landlord (6)
14 Mum (6)
17 Housing for aircraft (6)
18 Mozart opera "The Marriage of _____"? (6)
19 Expressed or mentioned (6)
22 Straw roofing (6)
24 Concubines room (3)
25 Ordinary; usual (6)
27 Ethnic (6)
29 Compel or require (11)

DOWN

1 Feminine pronoun (3)
2 Maurice ____ : famous actor? (5)
3 Postpone (5)
4 Pawns (5)
5 Absolutely perfect! (5)
6 Greek letter (3)
7 Amusement park and recreation centre in Cubbon Park (3,6)
9 Engagement (9)
12 The desert in Israel (5)
13 Egg-shaped (5)
15 Of Celtic descent? (5)
16 Spot on (5)
20 Humorous (5)
21 Stupid people (5)
22 Ankle bones (5)
23 Capital of Ghana (5)
26 Possess or have (3)
28 Brewed beverage (3)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: I EQUALS G

UY KWXFX UH KUGX KS FXYZXTK, HZSLUQI VSLQ UH ZUAXZP KS JX M ISSV UVXM.

Linemaro

I can say 'hello' in six languages. Which language should I use when we meet next?

Mindchow

That which corrodes the souls of the persecuted is the monstrous inner agreement with the prevailing prejudice against them

Joke of the day

Research is reading two books that have never been read in order to write a third that will never be read

Loop

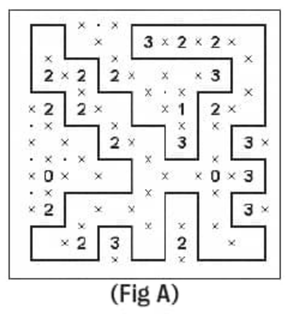
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

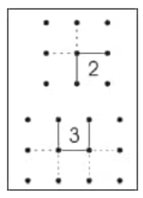
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

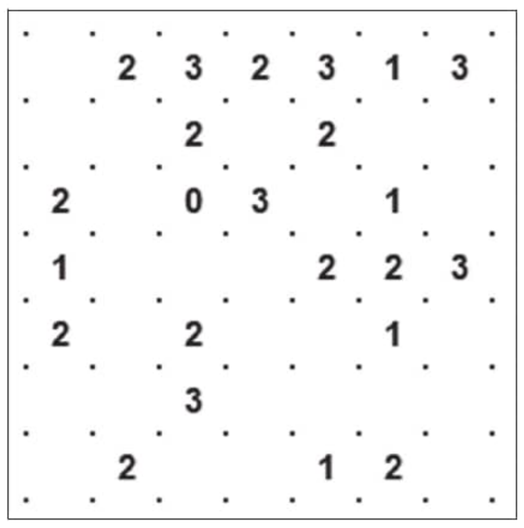
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



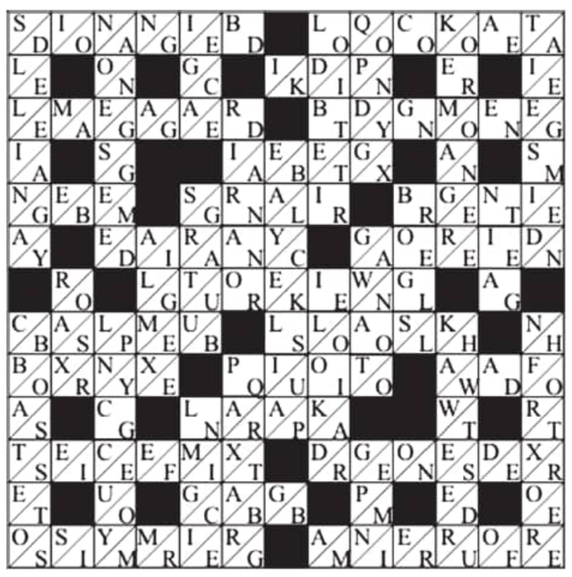
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5 G
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

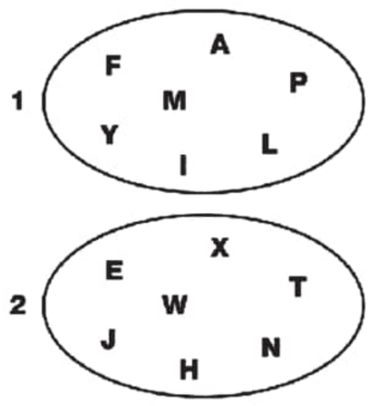
1 Grasp; 6 It rep; 7 Noise; 8 Arhat; 9 I Keno

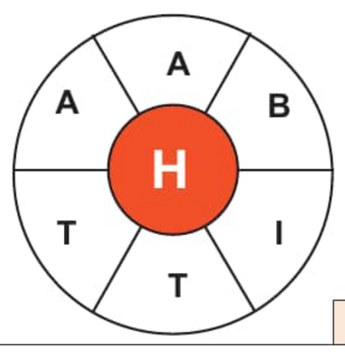
DOWN

1 Stake; 2 Troop; 3 Irish; 4 A pain; 5 Green

Mensapuzzle

Which letter is the odd one out in each shape?





Bull's eye

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

02 Average; 03 Good; 04 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

			7	4	3			
	4						3	
		7		1		9		
7	1		2		5		4	8
	5		4		1		2	
6	2		8		7		1	3
		3		8		4		
	9						6	
			3	5	9			

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy

□□□□□□□ = 14

5 6 7 8

Medium

□□□□□□□ = 27

3 3 5 8

Hard

□□□□□□□ = 13

2 5 8 5

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is lower. 2. Lamp is different. 3. Picture frame is thinner. 4. Collar is different. 5. Cable box wire is moved. 6. Bracelet is added.

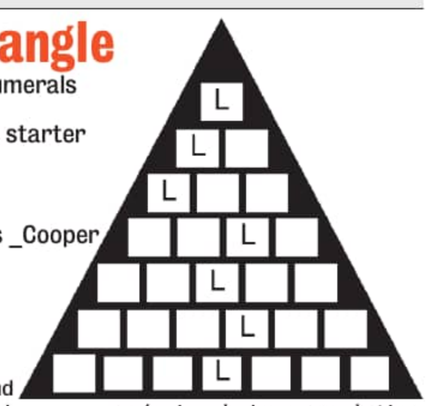
Riddler

Translate each word group into a phonetic sound, and then string them all together to form the name of a body of water.

1. Cat sound, dreidel letter, 18-hole sport
2. Unaffiliated film, Japanese currency, interjection, to eschew
3. Helper, flightless South American bird, clock sound, programming language

Alpha triangle

1 Fifty in Roman numerals
2 Behold!
3 Angeles or Lobos starter
4 Auctioneers cry
5 Grasps
6 Asian wild dogs
7 Big Bang Theorys _Cooper

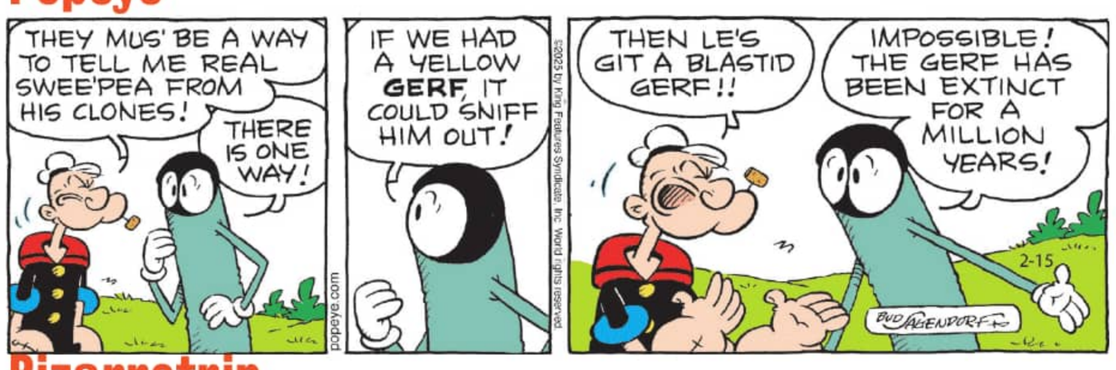


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye


THEY MUS' BE A WAY TO TELL ME REAL SWEE'PEA FROM HIS CLONES!
THERE IS ONE WAY!
IF WE HAD A YELLOW GERF, IT COULD SNIFF HIM OUT!
THEN LE'S GIT A BLASTID GERF!!
IMPOSSIBLE! THE GERF HAS BEEN EXTINCT FOR A MILLION YEARS!
2-15
BUD SAGENDORF
popeye.com
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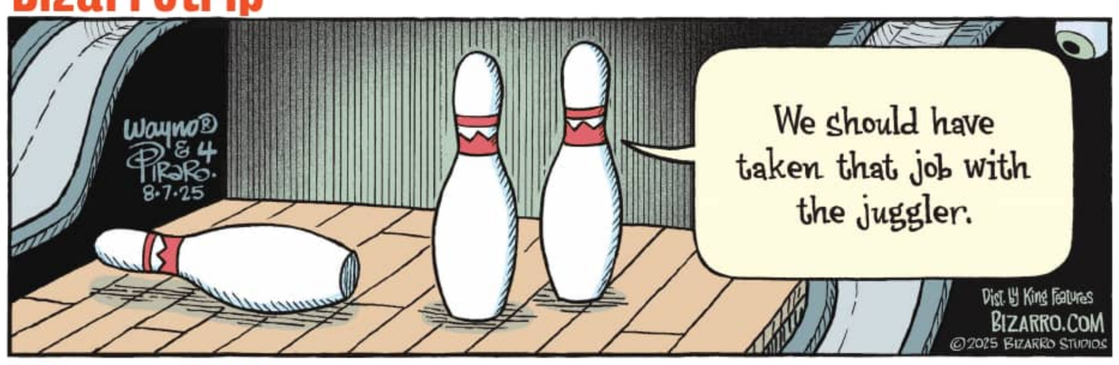
Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

DANNY THE DUNG BEETLE:
HI, I'M FILLING IN FOR DICK THE FLY TODAY
GOT ANY DUNG THAT YOU NEED ROLLED UP?
DANNY YUCK
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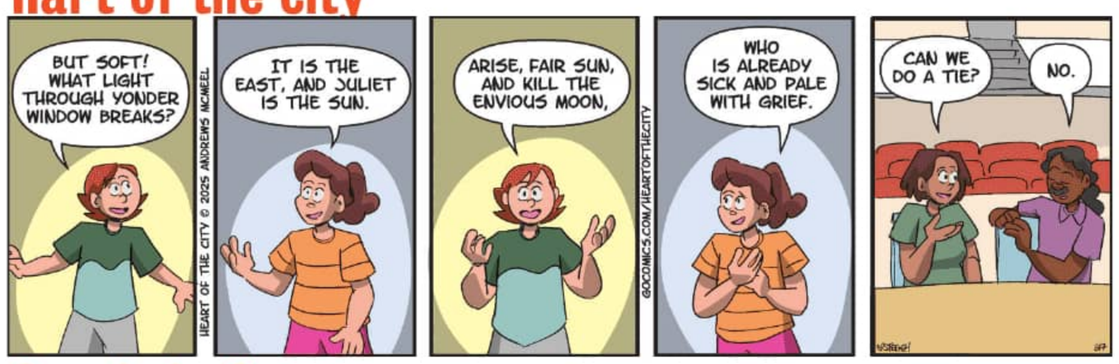
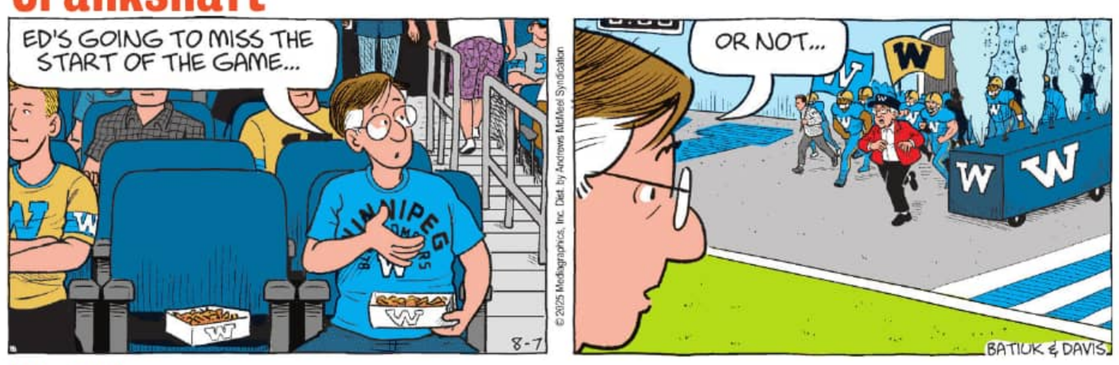
www.creators.com

Hart of the city


BUT SOFT! WHAT LIGHT THROUGH YONDER WINDOW BREAKS?
IT IS THE EAST, AND JULIET IS THE SUN.
ARISE, FAIR SUN, AND KILL THE ENVIOUS MOON,
WHO IS ALREADY SICK AND PALE WITH GRIEF.
CAN WE DO A TIE?
NO.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft


ED'S GOING TO MISS THE START OF THE GAME...
OR NOT...
WINNIPEG JETS
8-7
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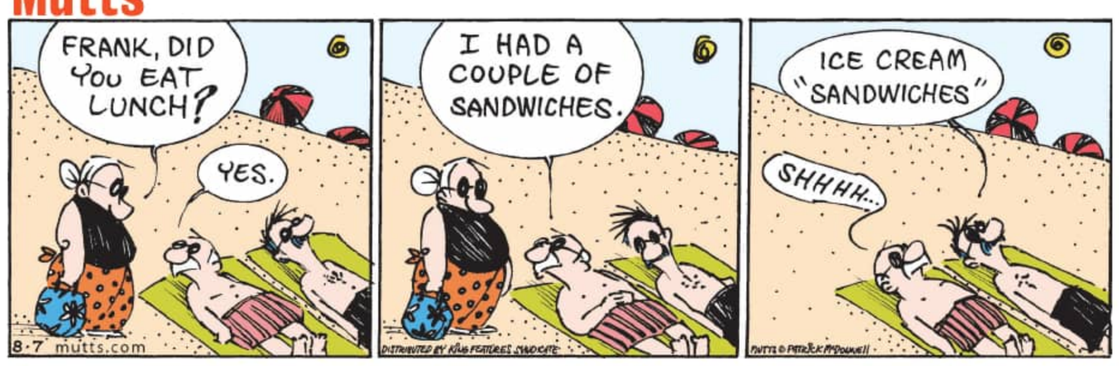
BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Your finances will take a definite turn for the better after mid-year due to a calculated, smart risk. Your career opens a surprising door to unconventional, exciting new opportunities. Love may involve a long-distance connection or a surprise, fated meeting. Your family fully supports your wildest dreams; lean on them for encouragement.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

Someone you once misjudged reappears, offering a pleasant surprise. You'll see them differently and realise past assumptions were wrong. Stay open; today reminds you appearances can deceive and people can amaze you.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Your romantic plans may shift unexpectedly, but the outcome will still delight you. A spontaneous change brings laughter, connection, and an enjoyable evening with someone special you've been eager to know.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

Your relationship needs adventure; break routine together. Try something bold, exciting, or unfamiliar. Exploring new experiences deepens connection, renews energy, and invites joy. Happiness unfolds once you step outside your usual comfort zone.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

A single conversation transforms your outlook today. Clarity replaces confusion as you see challenges differently. Remember, feeling lost is temporary; you're progressing steadily, learning valuable lessons, and moving toward the right direction.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Energy surges today; use it wisely. Plan a fun outing or adventure with friends. Step away from routine work to refresh your spirit and rediscover joy in simple, spontaneous pleasures.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Routine feels dull, so welcome change. Take a spontaneous trip or explore new places with loved ones. Stepping beyond comfort revives your spirit, strengthens connections, and fills your day with inspiration.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Unexpected surprises colour your day positively. Stay calm and follow through with your plans. Trust the unfolding events; they'll work in your favour and bring delightful, beneficial developments you didn't anticipate.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

Romantic surprises await; say yes to new experiences. Try something different instead of turning opportunities away. Fresh encounters spark excitement and may lead to unexpectedly fulfilling and enjoyable emotional discoveries.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

A mysterious new person captures your curiosity today. Though unsettling at first, their presence intrigues you. Don't judge prematurely; approach them with openness, and this connection could bring surprising positivity.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

Someone from your past reappears, reigniting interest. This is a chance to reconnect meaningfully. Don't fear vulnerability; welcome conversation and see where it leads; renewed companionship could bring warmth and joy.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

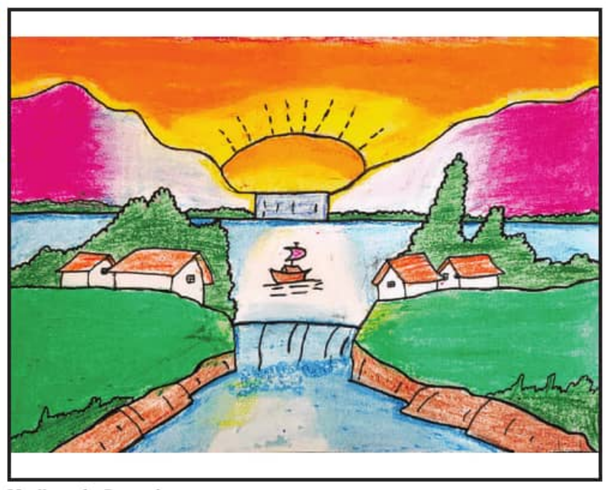
Spice up your love life with fresh experiences. Plan something fun with your partner, or date adventurously if single. Being open to new connections today brings excitement, laughter, and unexpected joy.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

Fate introduces someone captivating today. Chemistry flows effortlessly, creating magical, romantic energy. Allow yourself to be swept up in the moment; this encounter feels enchanting and could lead to something beautiful.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Medhansh, Bengaluru

Adirith, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

30+24-3=3a
3a=51 --> a = 17

BULL'S EYE

bath, habit, HABITAT, that

STRIKE OUT

S	I	M	M	E	R	■	M	I	R	R	O	R	■	■
T	■	U	■	C	A	B	■	P	■	E	■	O	■	■
S	E	E	F	I	T	■	D	E	N	S	E	R	■	■
A	■	C	■	N	A	P	A	■	W	■	R	■	■	■
O	R	Y	X	■	Q	U	I	T	■	A	D	O	■	■
C	A	L	E	B	■	S	L	A	S	H	■	H	■	■
O	■	L	U	R	K	I	N	G	■	A	■	■	■	■
A	■	D	I	R	A	C	■	G	O	R	E	D	■	■
N	E	E	■	G	N	A	R	■	B	E	T	E	■	■
I	■	G	■	I	B	E	X	■	N	■	M	■	■	■
L	A	G	G	E	D	■	B	Y	G	O	N	E	■	■
E	■	O	■	C	■	K	I	N	■	R	■	E	■	■
S	I	N	G	E	D	■	L	O	O	K	A	T	■	■

FAST FIVE

S	P	R	A	G
T	R	I	P	E
E	O	S	I	N
A	T	H	A	R
K	O	I	N	E

QUOTE UNCODE

If there is time to reflect, slowing down is likely to be a good idea.

QUICK

N	■	E	C	E	S	S	I	T	A	T	E	■	■	■
W	■	I	■	T	■	S	■	R	■	L	■	■	■	■
N	O	R	M	A	L	■	R	A	C	I	A	L	■	■
A	■	O	■	O	D	A	■	C	■	■	■	A	■	■
V	O	I	C	E	D	■	T	H	A	T	C	H	■	■
A	■	A	■	T	■	■	■	S	■	C	■	T	■	■
H	A	N	G	A	R	■	F	I	G	A	R	O	■	■
B	■	I	■	V	■	■	■	R	■	X	■	R	■	■
L	E	S	S	O	R	■	S	I	L	E	N	T	■	■
A	■	N	■	E	L	K	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	■
B	E	H	A	L	F	■	C	H	E	R	U	B	■	■
H	■	V	■	E	■	O	■	D	■	A	■	■	■	■
S	P	E	N	D	T	H	R	I	F	T	■	■	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE

1 = P, 2 = J All the other letters contain straight lines only.

RIDDLER

1. Purr - Shin - Golf == Persian Gulf,
2. Indie - Yen - Oh! - Shun == Indian Ocean &
3. Ald - Rhea - Tick - G == Adriatic Sea

SUDOKU

9	8	1	7	4	3	2	5	6
5	4	6	9	2	8	1	3	7
2	3	7	5	1	6	9	8	4
7	1	9	2	3	5	6	4	8
3	5	8	4	6	1	7	2	9
6	2	4	8	9	7	5	1	3
1	7	3	6	8	2	4	9	5
8	9	5	1	7	4	3	6	2
4	6	2	3	5	9	8	7	1

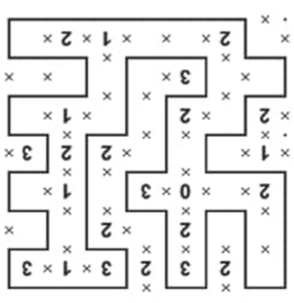
ALPHA TRIANGLE

L, Lo, Los, Sold, Holds, Dholes, Sheldon.

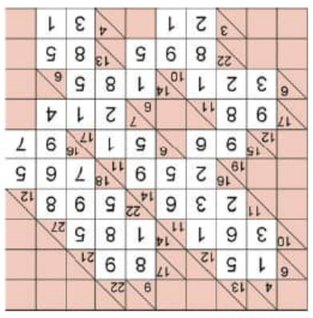
GO FIGURE

Easy
8 - 6 + 5 + 7 = 14
Medium
8 - 5 x 3 x 3 = 27
Hard
5 x 2 - 5 + 8 = 13

LOOP



KAKURO



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Conscious decision

Sushmita shares why she chose to stay awake during surgery and get back to set within 15 days

In February 2023, while filming the third season of the web series 'Aarya' in Jaipur, actress Sushmita Sen experienced a severe heart attack caused by a critical 95 percent blockage in her artery. She underwent an angioplasty procedure, remarkably choosing to stay awake and conscious throughout the surgery, refusing anesthesia to maintain control. Despite the gravity of the situation, she returned to the set within just 15 days, driven by her sense of responsibility towards the many daily wage workers relying on the production.

During her conversation with Divya Jain on a podcast, Sushmita opened up about her experience. She shared, "When you suffer a heart attack and you are conscious through it, you kind of know how close you came to being on the other side of life. Once you cross that, you also know how far behind it is now, and you know the difference. In my mind, everything is transient, including a heart attack. If I were not to survive it, then there would be no story to tell, but if you have survived it, then no point sitting harping about what happened then."

The actress shared that during her surgery, she chose to remain fully conscious. She said, "All my doctors will tell you, I was very impatient with them. I said I didn't want to be unconscious during the procedure. The control freak in me doesn't like losing consciousness. I was very clear about not numbing the pain; I wanted to see what was going on. I went through that and kept chatting with doctors, asking them to hurry up, because I wanted to go back on set. My entire crew was waiting in Jaipur." **-ETimes**

Pose of poise

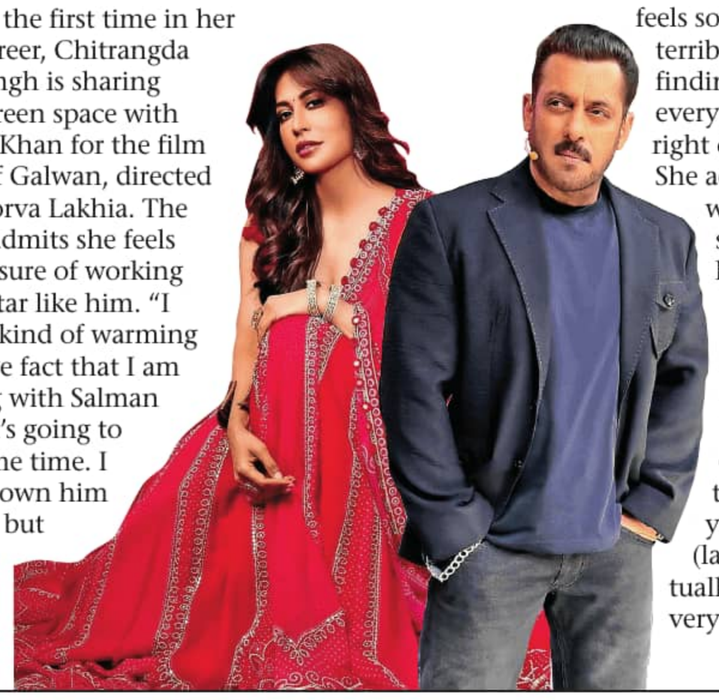
Priyanka Chopra caught everyone's eye on social media with a set of gorgeous photos from SS Rajamouli's event in Varanasi. Fans quickly reacted to her post. The occasion was meant to launch Mahesh Babu's first look poster and announce the movie's title.

Dressed in an ivory lehenga paired with an amazingly designed blouse, the actor's look is made even more striking by regal temple jewelry, including a stunning choker, maang tikka, and layered bangles. She captioned the post, "Channeling my inner Devi. #Mandakini #Varanasi," which prompted fans to flood the comment section, hailing her as a queen.

At the big Hyderabad event for SS Rajamouli's 'Varanasi', everyone's focus was on Priyanka. She stayed calm and friendly despite the crowd. When she got out of her car wearing a pretty white lehenga-choli, fans started cheering and photographers rushed to take pictures. A video shows her stopping to smile and pose for the photographers before going inside. She even joked she had to hurry when Rajamouli called her. **-ETimes**

A case of nerves

For the first time in her career, Chitrangda Singh is sharing screen space with Salman Khan for the film Battle of Galwan, directed by Apoorva Lakhia. The actress admits she feels the pressure of working with a star like him. "I am still kind of warming up to the fact that I am working with Salman Khan. It's going to take some time. I have known him socially, but to be on set with him feels so different. I was terribly nervous. I was finding faults with everything like this is not right or that is not right." She added, "We started with shooting a song. I didn't know him, and imagine... straight off diving into a song sequence. It kind of gets a little uncomfortable. When it comes to breaking the ice with him, you let him do that (laughs) because eventually, he makes you very comfortable." **-ETimes**



I loved 'Homebound', been living with it for 3 years: Martin Scorsese

Hollywood legend Martin Scorsese, who serves as an executive producer on Neeraj Ghaywan's directorial "Homebound", said he loved the film and has watched it several times.

Scorsese hosted the special screening of the film which was held at New York earlier this month. It was attended by the filmmaker alongside actors Vishal Jethwa and Ishaan Khatter.

Production banner Dharma Productions shared a video of the conversation and Q&A session between Scorsese and Ghaywan, which was conducted during the screening, on its official X handle on Saturday.

"We worked on the film and I loved the film and I was telling your actors that I have seen it so many times… having gone through the script. I was making 'Killers of the Flower Moon' and that was a long film and I was immersed in that," Scorsese is heard saying in the video.

Scorsese said he is satisfied that the American audience got to see the film.

"But I remember this, because I remember reading the script, and so in a way I have been living with it for 3 years so honestly it is quite satisfying that it is here. I love that audiences in America get to see this picture," he added. **-PTI**

Kiss-and-tell romantic comedy

PREMAM MADHURAM (KANNADA)

3.0 RATING ★★★★★

- **DIRECTOR** Gandhi Reddy
- **ACTORS** Gandhi Reddy, Aishwarya Dinesh, Sihi Kahi Chandru, Anusha Sampath Jain, Lapanga Raja, Agasthya Anup Vijaykumar, and Bhumika M Kakade.
- **Duration** 155 minutes
- **Certification** A

This film revolves around two lovers who go to any length to sacrifice their love if it helps the other. Director Gandhi Reddy, who debuts as a director and hero, has done a good job in both his roles. The director conveys a message on the importance of focusing on academics rather than wasting precious time during college days. The movie also has too many intimate and kissing scenes.

Vikram (Gandhi Reddy) and Meghana (Aishwarya Dinesh) are classmates. Meghana mistakes Vikram's behaviour and falls in love with him. However, Vikram craves for Bhumi (Bhumika M Kakade) who is in love with another person. Circumstances bring Vikram closer to Meghana. Meghana decides to go to Mumbai to work as assistant director for a movie. You have to watch the movie to know what happens to Meghana and Vikram.

As far as the performances of the actors are concerned, Gandhi Reddy, as a disenchanted paramour and possessive lover, has acted well. He will have a bright future if he focuses on his acting career. His dialogue delivery and gestures are good. Aishwarya Dinesh has pulled off the intimate scenes well and walks away with all honours for her sterling performance in the climax. Veteran actor Sihi Kahi Chandru adds value to the movie. Anusha Sampath Jain, as Charmi who takes life as it comes, has acted well. Lapang Raja, with his dialogues laced with North Karnataka diction, and Agasthya Anup Vijaykumar are good support.

The movie is worth a watch for adults. **-Y Maheswara Reddy**